

Main Office: 200 John Street West, Suite B1, Midtown Centre, OSHAWA, ON L1J 2B4
www.durhamcommunitylegalclinic.ca • E: dclinfo@gmail.com • T: 905.728.7321 • Toll Free: 1.888.297.2202

Satellite Offices: BY APPOINTMENT ONLY • AJAX, UXBRIDGE, CANNINGTON
 Call 905.441.1752 or 1.888.297.2202



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We Have Moved!

We are pleased to announce that Phase I of our move to the Midtown Centre has been successfully completed! The staff have settled in and we are excited to see the renovations to our permanent office space begin. We anticipate that Phase 2 of the move will be completed in the New Year.



Education Law

By: Debra Knoke Alves, Paralegal

We are excited to announce that we are now providing legal services in Education Law. The focus will be on students that are part of the Special Education stream in the Durham District School Board and the Durham Catholic District School Board in elementary and secondary schools.

~ ACCESS TO JUSTICE HUB~

By Deborah Hastings, Executive Director

The Clinic has now created an Access to Justice HUB. The HUB consists of paralegal students from Durham College working full time within this HUB. The students are receiving professional experience while being supervised. The HUB also consists of agencies who provide their expertise along with the legal assistance provided by the Clinic and the HUB students to better serve the clients. The agencies currently participating in the HUB are: Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre, Durham Mental Health Services, Canadian Mental Health Services, John Howard Society and Community Development Council of Durham.

The HUB is also providing a Tax Clinic to low income clients. This Tax Clinic will operate throughout the year by appointment only.

The Durham Community Legal Clinic and the Access to Justice HUB have been supported by many community partners and stakeholders. Specifically, we would like to thank the Region of Durham, Durham College and the City of Oshawa for their incredible dedication and support in establishing the HUB at the Durham Community Legal Clinic.

Employment Law

By Aravinth Jegatheesan, Lawyer,
Matthew Ferguson, & Shyla Oates-Pennell,
Paralegals

The Durham Community Legal Clinic has recently decided to expand their employment law services by forming an employment team. The employment team consists of one lawyer and two paralegals that will be providing services in the areas of:

- Workers Compensation
- Human Rights
- Employment Insurance
- Human rights
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Employment Standards
- Wrongful Dismissal
- Canada Pension Plan-Disability

Having the employment team will allow the DCLC to provide a wider range of much needed employment law services within the community. The employment team will also be working closely with other community agencies in the Durham Region such as the Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre and the John Howard Society to ensure that our clients receive the best possible wrap-around service.

The employment team is available to provide free presentations to your staff or at your various community events. We also provide free pamphlets, advice and referrals to other community agencies.



Our Services

The Clinic provides free legal information and advice to all residents of Durham. If the client financially qualifies for legal services, representation may be provided.

- ♦ Tenant Rights
- ♦ Ontario Disability Support Program Benefits
- ♦ Canada Pension Plan Disability
- ♦ Canada Pension Plan Survivor Benefits
- ♦ Criminal Injuries Compensation Board
- ♦ Workplace Safety & Insurance Board and Workplace Safety & Insurance Appeals Tribunal
- ♦ Ontario Works
- ♦ Education Law
- ♦ Employment Insurance
- ♦ Employment Law
- ♦ Human Rights
- ♦ Immigration
- ♦ Senior Law
- ♦ Small Claims Court
- ♦ Consumer Law
- ♦ Tax Clinic
- ♦ Domestic Violence Legal Aid Advice Referrals
- ♦ Wills & Powers of Attorney
- ♦ Commissioning and Notarizing of documents
- ♦ And more ...

Other Services Include:

- ♦ Seminars, Pamphlets, Self-Help Kits, Referrals
- Contact the Durham Community Legal Clinic if you have any questions or require advice in any of the above areas.*

Financially Empowering Clients on ODSP and OW

By Colleen Archer, Social Service Worker

As the Durham Community Legal Clinic serves over 10,000 low income clients a year we recognize the need for clients to learn how to boost their incomes to obtain a better quality of life.

By running a free year round tax clinic starting in January 2019, clients will gain a better understanding that there are many federal and provincial benefits they are eligible for only through filing their taxes yearly. According to Prosper Canada, “evidence shows that many people living on a low income can quickly boost their incomes – sometimes as much as 50 per cent for families – if they have the tools and supports to access all the government benefits they’re entitled to.”

Having a year round tax clinic will help to bring down the following barriers:

- They are unaware of benefits
- Worried they might owe CRA money
- Complexity (tax system and forms)
- Low Literacy / English language / numeracy
- No secure computer access
- Difficulty assembling paperwork
- Mistrust of government
- Lack of confidence



Running the tax clinic year round will be an intervention itself. The tax clinic will provide guidance, mentorship, financial empowerment and financial literacy to clients that have a simple tax situation.

In Ontario alone, there are 41 potential federal and provincial income benefit programs that people with low-incomes can access directly or indirectly through tax filing. These include:

- Important income supports for individuals and families with low-incomes like the Child Tax Benefit, Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Working Income Tax Benefit and the GST / HST credit.
- Tax credits are available to eligible Canadians more generally like the Disability Tax Credit, Caregiver Tax Credit, or Universal Child Care benefit.
- A range of provincial programs aimed at supplementing federal benefits or helping low-income households to offset expenses for things like medicine, home heating, etc.

As we get closer to January 2019, Colleen Archer, the Co-ordinator of the Tax Clinic looks forward to this unique opportunity of helping those clients that are eligible for assistance from a CVITP volunteer through the CRA reach their goals financially.

As January is fast approaching, please pay attention for the marketing material on the Tax Clinic.



Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits?

Your client is entitled to apply for CPP-D benefits if:

- *they have worked and paid into CPP*
- *they have a disability*
- *they are unable to work now and in the future*

The process of applying for CPP-D:

1. Complete the application and submit to Service Canada
2. A doctor is required to complete a medical report in support of the client's application

If your client has been denied CPP-D based on the Application submitted:

1. Contact DCLC to assist in a Reconsideration Appeal to Service Canada
2. Contact DCLC to assist your client to understand what other sources of income is available to apply for.

Wills and Powers of Attorney

By: Deborah Hastings, Executive Director

All clients should have a Will and Powers of Attorney. It does not matter whether your client has a lot of income or assets. The Powers of Attorney documents are very important for when your client gets sick and cannot make their own decisions.

The Will provides final decisions with respect to any assets/personal belongings of the client, funeral instructions, specific bequests, and who will look after children.

The DCLC will interview your client to determine if he/she is mentally capable of providing instructions for these documents to be completed.

The Will and Personal Care/Property Power of Attorneys are **FREE** to clients who financially qualify for DCLC services.

Senior Law

By Debra Knoke Alves, Paralegal Paralegal

We are continuing with our senior law services for our clients over 55.

Our seniors will continue to receive legal services with their respective consumer law problems.

Additionally, seniors that have problems with their retirement homes are now part of our senior law services as well.

Call the Legal Clinic with questions regarding these areas or any of our other areas of law.

Walk In Hours

Please call our Receptionist for our walk-in hours as they vary. We accept walk-ins at specific times for:

- ODSP Appeals
- Tenant matters
- Commissioning (not notarizations)

All other matters require appointments.



Landlord and Tenant Board Shortage

By: Colette Myers, Danielle Scheffel & Ashley Somerville, Paralegals

The government of Ontario provides dispute resolution of landlord and tenant matters under the *Residential Tenancies Act, 2006*.

Currently there is a shortage of adjudicators in the Province and many tribunal locations are taking longer to schedule, if they are scheduling at all.

The Landlord and Tenant Board posted the following on their website:

The Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) is experiencing a shortage of adjudicators (members) which is affecting the LTB's ability to meet its service standards. As a result, you may experience a longer than usual number of days before a hearing can take place. All parties appearing before the LTB are encouraged to take a close look at the Notice of Hearing as your hearing details (location of your hearing or how your hearing will be conducted) may differ from previous hearings. The LTB continues to be committed to providing fair, effective and timely dispute resolution.

As a legal clinic operating in Durham Region we provide services to tenants relating to their housing matters. These matters could be evictions by the landlord, filing an application against the landlord or representing tenants at their hearings should they qualify for our services.

We ask that you contact your local MPP office to voice your concerns.

WE NOW OFFER SERVICES IN IMMIGRATION LAW

By: Erin Fergusson, Paralegal

Canadian Immigration Law applies to people who want to visit Canada, study in Canada, work in Canada, and ultimately stay in Canada.

For newcomers to Canada it can be challenging to navigate through the legal system. If you would like more information regarding extending your visa or permit, sponsorships, becoming a permanent resident, or Canadian citizen please contact the Durham Community Legal Clinic.



Other Benefits available for clients on ODSP/OW

By: Cathy Duignan, Emily Robb & Stefanie Famme, Paralegals

There are benefits you may be able to receive when you are in receipt of Ontario Works and/or ODSP, including:

- Cost of transportation reasonably required for medical treatment
- Contribution for an assistive device under the Assistive Devices Program if there is no other source of funding available
- Batteries and repairs for mobility devices
- An amount towards vision assessment every 24 months

ODSP Health Benefits – up to a certain amount and must be approved by ODSP in advance, including, but not limited to:

- Hearing services
- Dental services
- Vision services
- Guide dog care
- Up Front Child Care Assistance
- Transition Child Benefit

Discretionary Benefits, including, but not limited to:

- Prosthetic appliances, including eye-glasses
- Health-related aids required by medical professional
- Dental
- Funeral costs

Both Ontario Works and ODSP recipients must apply for discretionary benefits through their local Ontario Works office. Discretionary benefits are NOT mandatory – Eligibility will be determined by Ontario Works office.

If you disagree with a decision by ODSP or Ontario Works, it may be appealable. Contact the legal clinic for assistance.



Free Legal Information Sessions to your Agency

We welcome the opportunity to visit community agencies to provide legal information to their staff in the areas of law covered by our Clinic. We will also provide legal information at your community event. Contact us if this is of interest to you.

Our Staff

Executive Director

Deborah Hastings

Office Manager

Kim Kreider

Paralegals

Cathy Duignan

Emily Robb

Matthew Ferguson

Danielle Scheffel

Shyla Oates-Pennell

Debra Knoke Alves

Colette Myers

Erin Ferguson

Stefanie Famme

Ashley Somerville

Ara Jegatheesan

Support Staff

Lisa Petit

Jeremy Arnott

Social Service Worker/Support Staff

Colleen Archer

Our Board of Directors

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[John Howard Society](#)

Stephen Bourque, Vice-Chair

[Durham College \(retired\)](#)

Alex Mak, Treasurer

[Region of Durham](#)

Tara Robins, Secretary

[Canadian Mental Health Association Durham](#)

Mark Bouwmeester

[Durham Mental Health Services](#)

Eleanor Hastie

[Traditions of Durham Retirement Residence](#)

Ana Bernal

[Durham College](#)

Vanessa Slater

[Brain Injury Association Durham](#)

Michelle Campbell

[Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre](#)

Heather Hofmann

[Community Development Council Durham](#)

Victoria Madsen

[Region of Durham](#)

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